

Remarks on the relationships of the Reptiles and Amphibians of the Cayman Islands

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All the herpetofauna of the Caymans appears to have come across water by rafting, unless a few of the undifferentiated forms have been accidentally imported by man.

In most cases the affinities and therefore the source area are unequivocally indicated. However, in the case of the small geckos *Sphaerodactylus*, all three Cayman taxa are related to *S. argus*, the commonest sphaerodactyl of Jamaica, a species which occurs also on eastern Cuba. *S. argus* is often believed to have been brought to Cuba by human agency and its limited distribution there is regarded as evidence of this. I have hesitantly adopted this view. *Anolis sagrei* on Little Cayman is the reverse case: it is the commonest species on Cuba and has a limited (western) distribution on Jamaica and has not differentiated there. It may not be zoogeographically significant in either case: it is the only instance in the whole Cayman fauna of a second species of one genus on any one island. Since it is quite undifferentiated, it may have come very recently with human aid.

Crocodylus has been omitted from the table. The relevant species — *acutus* — has an uncertain distribution in the Caymans and in any case is a marine and brackish water species, wide-ranging and of little zoogeographic significance. It occurs on both Cuba and Jamaica and on the fringes of mainland.

For all three of the Cayman Islands, despite interesting faunal differences, about 70% of the total herpetofauna — all of the amphibia and two-thirds or more of the reptiles — are Cuban in origin. It is a curious point that all the geckos seem to be of Jamaican affinities, though Cuba is quite rich in members of this family. It is less surprising that the single anguid is Jamaican, since the related Jamaican form is quite common, while the single Cuban species is not.



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